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24 September 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

FROM : Chief, NFAC Planning, Management, and Evaluation Staff

SUBJECT : Quality Control Project

1. We have touched base with the SRP and D/OCO and developed a mutually agreed outline and plan of attack for conducting the quality control study. We probably will end up with two separate but overlapping papers: one, an overview of the quality control process in NFAC--this will become part of Phase II of the SRP study; the other, a more extensive report which will address editorial and word processing problems as well as quality control--this would end up as a staff study for you from PMES.

2. Attached are:

- a draft memo from you to the relevant office directors kicking off the study (alternatively, we could launch this at a morning staff meeting);
- an outline and proposed plan of attack;
- a list of questions to guide us during interviews with office personnel.

3. Your comments on any of the above are invited before we start.



STAT

Attachment:
As Stated

cc:SRP
D/OCO

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DRAFT

24 September 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Office of Political Analysis
Director, Office of Strategic Research
Director, Office of Scientific & Weapons Research
Director, Office of Economic Research
Director, Office of Geographic & Societal Research
Director, Office of Current Operations

SUBJECT : Quality Control Within NFAC

1. In connection with Phase II of the SRP assessment of NFAC production, the Production Planning and Review Group of PMES will be reviewing quality control procedures within NFAC. Editorial and word processing needs and procedures will be addressed as well as substantive review and broader quality control questions.

2. Members of PPRG and the SRP will be in touch with you and members of your staff to gather information and obtain your thoughts on these and related matters. Your cooperation is requested in this important task.

Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.

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Quality Control of NFAC Publications

1. Outline

A. Scope and Objectives

1. To describe, compare, and assess the mechanisms used within each production office, OCO, and the NFAC staff to assure control over the quality of all office products (IAs, IMs, RPs, RAs, serials, and typescripts).

2. To identify problem areas and propose possible solutions.

3. To identify the points in the review/production process where we should concentrate our efforts to improve and strengthen editorial/review capabilities.

B. Procedures (Descriptive)

1. Offices

2. Publications Division/OCO

3. NFAC Review (PPRG)

C. Problem Areas to be Addressed (Analytical)

1. Initiation

2. Drafting

3. Coordination

brief coverage

4. Substantive Review (Branch, Division, Office, OCO/Prod, PPRG)

} Combine?

5. Editing (ditto)

6. Word Processing

7. Graphics

8. Implications for Publication Process

9. Other

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D. Options/Recommendations

II. Plan of Attack

- A. Prepare Survey Questions (Discuss with C/PMES, D/OCO, SRP, D/NFAC first)
- B. Notify Offices
- C. Conduct Interviews
 - 1. Production Officers
 - 2. Publications Division, OCO
 - 3. Division Chiefs
 - 4. Branch Chiefs
 - 5. Analysts
 - 6. Carto-Graphic Division, OGSR
 - 7. Office Directors
- D. Assemble Findings and Draft Report
- E. Develop Options/Recommendations in Cooperation with SRP

GENERAL

How do you define "quality control" as it pertains to intelligence publications emanating from your office? Briefings? Have you established any criteria or guidelines for maintaining quality control?

Is there a procedural difference between substantive review and editing within your office? How are these two functions performed in your office?

Does the review process differ as between IAs, IMs, and RPs on the one hand and serials on the other? Why? How do you review typescripts? Briefings? Joint papers? How about fast-track papers or ones intended for high-level readers?

On a given paper, who has the ultimate responsibility for substance? For editing?

How many levels of review are there in your office? For substantive review? For editorial review? Where is the greatest bottleneck or delay in the review process? Do you think any of these levels or steps can safely be eliminated? If so, which ones? Do you think the mere existence of so many levels encourages sloppiness at the lower levels?

Who is the last person in your office to approve a draft before it is submitted for publication? How often are drafts rejected or turned back by the final reviewer for further work? Who decides whether a marginal memo is worth publishing?

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GENERAL (continued)

To what extent do you feel your office should be responsible for maintaining quality control? D/NFAC (or his representative)?

At what point in the production process do you seek coordination?

Is there a distinction between "editing" and "technical editing"? How would you define the latter?

Do you consider "technical editing" necessary?

NFAC, through PPRG and the Publications Division of OCO, has established certain patterns of style and presentation. When a manuscript leaves your office to enter the publication process in OCO, do you feel that it needs additional "technical editing" to conform to those patterns of style and presentation?

When a manuscript leaves your office to enter the publication process in OCO, do you feel that it should be subjected to additional substantive review?

If the Publications Division of OCO imposes "technical editing" on your product, do you consider it necessary to review the results of that process?

What are some of the threats to quality control over your office products?

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GENERAL (continued)

How do you deal with those threats?

At what point is your office ready to submit a paper for publication?

After branch review? Division review? Office review?

Do some divisions within your office seem to turn out a consistently higher quality product than others? If so, why? (E.g., better writers, better quality control, or what?)

Having explored the review/production process, can you identify points where NFAC and its components should concentrate their efforts to improve and strengthen editorial/review capabilities? In the divisions? At front-office levels? At the NFAC level?

If enough good editors were made available to you, would you alter the present review/quality control process in your office? How so?

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FUNCTIONAL

Do the editors and others in your office involved in the review process regularly read raw traffic and/or finished intelligence relating to the substance of the papers they review?

Who generally writes the summary or key judgments for intelligence memoranda and assessments produced in your office?

Do you think there is an advantage in having someone other than the analyst write the summary or key judgments?

Are there good thinkers who are bad writers? And vice versa? Is remediation possible? Worthwhile?

Do you have people in your office who do "technical editing"? If so, is that their primary function? Are they professional editors or were they originally analysts who will go back to analytical assignments later? Do they have substantive review responsibilities as well as editorial?

Do you have office "expeditors" who are responsible for guiding projects through the publication process to completion?

What sort of career planning does your office do for people assigned to full-time or "technical" editorial positions?

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FUNCTIONAL (continued)

How does your office decide who should be placed in such positions?

Are your editors assigned to divisions or to the office at large?

Do you feel that a highly qualified editor from another office can make a useful contribution to a product from your own office?

Are you concerned that a less qualified editor from another office might inflict damage upon a product from your own office?

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GRAPHICS

How important is quality control over graphics? Within your office, is it equal to quality control over text? Has this been a problem within your office?

Who in your office is primarily responsible for approving the graphics that appear in an intelligence publication?

At what point in the production process is this approval given? Initiation? Plate production? Printer's proof, or dylux? Completed publication?

Do you consider the maintenance of quality control over graphics a specialized function? Do you have people who are particularly good at it?

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WORD PROCESSING

Word processing machinery, in various degrees of sophistication, has been installed in just about every NFAC office. Has the equipment in your office been a significant help? In what ways?

Will the introduction of more word processing machinery cause changes in your mode of operation: specifically, do you anticipate that branch chiefs, division chiefs, and even office directors will be able to work, not with pencil and paper, but with drafts projected on a screen?

Do you ever get the impression that the tail is wagging the dog, that the introduction of word processing and typesetting equipment is having an inordinate effect upon the way we do business?

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PUBLISHING

Can you cite some advantages, or disadvantages, for your office in using a centralized NFAC publishing entity?

Would you prefer to use the services of a centralized NFAC publishing entity, or to run a publishing unit in your own office?

How many levels in your office inspect page proofs before a project goes to the printers?

How many levels in your office inspect a printer's proof, or dylux, before an assessment is printed?

How many levels in your office inspect a completed publication before it is released for dissemination? Who signs off?

If there were an arrangement whereby a paper could be published precisely as the office had approved it in a final draft that had cleared NFAC and OCO editorial review, would you be willing to forego office review at the latter stages of publication processing?

Do you think such an arrangement is within the capabilities of NFAC? If so, what do you think is required?

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PUBLISHING (continued)

So far as the publication of your own office products is concerned, how would you rate the performance in the past year of the OCO Publications Division (formerly PPG)? Problem areas?

Would you like to publish more, or fewer but better, papers?

Are you aware of any particular factors or procedures that cause delay in the publication process? How would you deal with them?

Have you observed, in the Publications Division of OCO, any areas of expertise or specialized functions that have been helpful to your office?

Could you envision adding to the Publications Division of OCO any particular area of expertise or specialized function, to be shared by NFAC offices, that would be helpful in planning and producing intelligence publications?

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INITIATION/PLANNING

Who in your office determines that an issue should be addressed in a formal intelligence publication such as an assessment, research paper, or memorandum?

Does your office have a panel, a board, or some other group to evaluate the need for a paper before an analyst starts writing it? Does this group have scheduled meetings?

Does your office use concept papers, outlines, or other written instruments in determining that the office should produce a paper and that the paper is headed in the right direction?

What are your views as to the advantages or disadvantages of formal mechanisms and procedures in determining whether the office should produce an intelligence publication on a given issue?